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# Numbers of People Providing Informal Care Relevant to Take-up of a Care Vouchers Scheme for Older People

**Linda Pickard**

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**PSSRU DISCUSSION PAPER 2420**

**NUMBERS OF PEOPLE PROVIDING INFORMAL CARE  
RELEVANT TO TAKE-UP OF A CARE VOUCHERS SCHEME FOR OLDER  
PEOPLE**

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## **DISCUSSION PAPER 2420**

### **NUMBERS OF PEOPLE PROVIDING INFORMAL CARE RELEVANT TO TAKE-UP OF A CARE VOUCHERS SCHEME FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

**LINDA PICKARD**

#### **Aims of the paper**

The aim of this paper is to describe the numbers of people providing informal (unpaid) care to older people in terms of dimensions potentially relevant to a care vouchers scheme. Such a scheme would be primarily relevant to adults under state pension age who are in paid employment, particularly those working for large establishments, those working in the public sector and those earning less than the threshold for the higher rate of tax.

#### **Methodology**

The analysis uses the 2000/01 General Household Survey (GHS) data on provision of informal care. The GHS was a multipurpose continuous survey based on a large sample of the general population resident in private (non-institutional) households in Great Britain. In the 2000/01 GHS, approximately 14,000 people aged 16 and over throughout the country responded to the questions on informal care. Respondents in the 2000/01 GHS were asked whether they looked after someone who is sick, handicapped or elderly. In the survey, looking after someone is defined as giving special help to them or providing some regular service or help to them. All percentages presented in this report are based on data weighted to compensate for differential nonresponse. Both the unweighted and weighted bases are given (cf Maher & Green 2002).

The analysis presented here first identifies the probability of an adult aged 16 and over providing care to an older person, defined as a person aged 65 and over. People providing care to an older person are separated into those who are at and below state pension age (spa). State pension age is defined as below age 60 for women and below age 65 for men. The probability of providing care by adults under state pension age is multiplied by the population of Great Britain aged 16 to state pension age in 2000, to generate an estimated number of people under state pension age providing care to an older person. This estimate utilises Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2000

population estimates for Great Britain, which were updated in January 2005 in the light of local authority population studies.

The analysis then identifies carers of older people under state pension age by the relationship of the person cared for to the carer. Three categories are identified: people providing care to a spouse or partner, to a parent or parent-in-law and to another person (including other relatives, friends and neighbours). Where carers provide care to people in more than one category they have been ordered so that spouse care precedes intergenerational care and intergenerational care precedes care to another person, so that each carer is assigned only one care relationship.

The analysis then identifies adults under state pension age who provide care to an older person by their economic status, using a three-fold classification of economic status (unemployed, economically inactive and employed).

Adults under state pension age who provide care to an older person and are in paid employment are further broken down by the size of the establishment in which they work. The GHS includes some information on the size of establishment in which employed respondents work. The classification utilised here identifies those working for establishments of 100 people or more, which are described as 'large' establishments.

Adults under state pension age, who provide care to an older person and are employed in 'large' establishments, are further broken down into the sector in which they work. The GHS includes some information on the sector in which employed respondents work. A distinction is drawn here between people working for 'other services' and those working elsewhere (such as manufacturing, transport, distribution, engineering, bank and finance).

Finally, adults under state pension age who provide care to an older person and are employed in large establishments, both for 'other services' and elsewhere, are further broken down by their income. The income variable used in the analysis is the gross annual income from employment, that is, it is pre-tax income for individuals. Incomes above or below the higher tax threshold, which in 2000/01 was £28,400 p.a., are distinguished.

## Numbers of people under state pension age providing care to an older person

In 2000/01, the GHS identified a total of 15.8% of adults as providing care for a sick, disabled or elderly person. The probability of an adult providing care to an *older person* was 11.6% in 2000/01 (Table 1). It should be noted that this probability is not strictly comparable to the probabilities of providing care to an older person using earlier GHS data sets (Pickard 2002) since the figure for 2000/01 is based on weighted data and previous figures were based on unweighted data.

In 2000/01, the probability of an adult aged between 16 and state pension age (spa) providing care to an older person was 10.7% (Table 1). The probability of providing care to an older person among those who were themselves of state pension age was somewhat higher (14.7%).

**Table 1**

**Percentage of adults who were providing care to an older person (aged 65 and over) by broad age bands of carers, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 and over</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>		
	All adults	Broad age bands	
		Below spa	Spa and above
Providing care	15.8	15.2	17.6
Providing care to older person	11.6	10.7	14.7
<i>Weighted bases (000's) = 100%</i>	<i>42,509</i>	<i>32,816</i>	<i>9,693</i>
<i>Unweighted sample</i>	<i>14,124</i>	<i>10,674</i>	<i>3,450</i>

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis)*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

Official population data estimate that there were 35.12 million people aged between 16 and state pension age in mid-2000. With a probability of providing care of 10.7 %, *there were therefore an estimated 3.8 million people under state pension age providing care to an older person in 2000.*

## Numbers of people under state pension age providing care to an older person by relationship of person cared for to carer

The probability of providing care to an older person varies by the relationship of the person cared for to the carer. Table 2 shows the probability of providing care to an older person by type of relationship, distinguishing the probability of caring for a spouse/partner, parent/parent-in-law and another person. The table gives probabilities for those of state pension age and those below state pension age. The table shows that, among people below state pension age, the probability of providing care to a parent or parent-in-law is higher (7.2%) than the probability of providing care to either a spouse/partner (0.2%) or another person (3.4%). It should be noted that the sample size of people under state pension age providing care to an older spouse is very small, with a sample size of only 21 individuals in the GHS survey (and it is strongly recommended that this category is combined with another).

**Table 2**

**Percentage of adults who were providing care to an older person (aged 65 and over) by broad age bands of carers and relationship of cared for person to carer, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 and over</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>		
	All adults	Broad age bands	
Relationship of older person cared for to carer		Below spa	Spa and above
Spouse/partner	1.3	0.2	5.1
Parent/-in-law	6.2	7.2	2.9
Other	4.1	3.4	6.7
All providing care to older person	11.6	10.7	14.7
<i>Weighted bases (000's) = 100%</i>	<i>42,509</i>	<i>32,816</i>	<i>9,693</i>
<i>Unweighted sample</i>	<i>14,124</i>	<i>10,674</i>	<i>3,450</i>

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis)*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

The number of people under state pension age providing care to an older parent or parent-in-law greatly exceeds the number providing care in any other relationship (Table 3). Of the estimated 3.8 million people under state pension age providing care to an older person in 2000/01, over 2.5 million were providing care to a parent/-in-law.

**Table 3**

**Estimated numbers of persons aged 16 to state pension age who were providing care to an older person (aged 65 and over) by relationship of cared for person to carer, 2000**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age (spa)</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Estimated numbers (in thousands) providing care to older person
Spouse/partner	64.25
Parent/in-law	2,514.67
Other	1,181.61
Total	3,760.53

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates  
Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

**Economic status of persons under state pension age providing care to an older person by relationship of person cared for to carer**

Table 4 below shows the economic status of people under state pension age providing care to an older person by the relationship of the person cared for to the carer in the 2000/01 GHS. Nearly three quarters of all those providing care to an older person were employed. The proportion employed seems lower among those under state pension age providing care to an older spouse than in other relationships, but the small sample size of these spouse carers should be noted.

**Table 4**

**Economic status of persons under state pension age providing care to older persons by relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age (spa)</i>		<i>Great Britain (row percentages)</i>					
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Economic Status				Total	Weighted sample base (000's)	Unweighted sample
	Unemployed	Economically Inactive	Employed				
Spouse/partner	[0]	[64]	[36]		100	60	21
Parent/-in-law	2	23	75		100	2,350	807
Other	5	23	72		100	1,104	367
Total	3	23	73		100	3,514	1,195

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

Of the estimated 3.8 million people under state pension age providing care to an older person in 2000, an estimated 2.8 million were in paid employment (Table 5). Of these, nearly 1.9 million were providing care to older parents/parents-in-law, around 25 thousand were providing care to a spouse/partner and around 850 thousand were providing care to another person (Table 5).

**Table 5**

**Estimated number (thousands) of persons under state pension age providing care to an older person, by economic status and relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age (spa)</i>		<i>Great Britain</i>			
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Numbers in thousands providing care to older person by economic status				
	Unemployed	Economically Inactive	Employed	Total	
Spouse/partner	[0.00]	[41.01]	[23.24]	[64.25]	
Parent/-in-law	61.51	567.06	1,886.10	2,514.67	
Other	56.33	275.00	850.28	1,181.61	
Total	117.84	883.08	2,759.62	3,760.53	

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

## Provision of care to an older person by people in paid employment (under state pension age)

### *Size of firm*

Table 6 shows the size of firm of people in paid employment (under state pension age) who provide care to an older person by the relationship of the person cared for to the carer in the 2000/01 GHS sample. A distinction is drawn in the table between people working in ‘large’ establishments, defined as those employing 100 people or more, and people working in smaller establishments. The table shows that only around a third of employed carers providing care to an older person are employed in establishments of 100 people or more. It should, however, be noted that data on this variable is missing for a relatively large number of people in the GHS sample.

**Table 6**

**Size of establishment of employed persons providing care to an older person, by relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>				<i>Great Britain (row percentages)</i>		
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Size of establishment in which employed			Total	Weighted sample base (000's)	Unweighted sample
	<100 people	100 people or more	Missing			
Spouse/partner	[49]	[39]	[12]	100	22	8
Parent/-in-law	49	36	15	100	1,762	605
Other	55	33	11	100	795	264
Total	51	35	14	100	2,579	877

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

Table 7 shows numbers of employed people providing care to an older person by the size of establishment in which they worked in 2000. Of the estimated 2.8 million people in paid employment who provided care to an older person, less than a million were employed in establishments of 100 people or more. Of these, over two thirds provided care to an older parent and/or parent-in-law.

**Table 7****Estimated number (thousands) of persons in paid employment providing care to an older person, by relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>				<i>Great Britain</i>
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Size of establishment in which employed			Total
	<100 people	100 people or more	Missing	
Spouse/partner	[11.32]	[9.03]	[2.89]	[23.24]
Parent/-in-law	918.62	675.28	292.21	1,886.10
Other	471.10	281.62	97.56	850.28
Total	1,401.03	965.92	392.66	2,759.62

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

***Employment sector of those employed in 'large' firms***

Table 8 shows the employment sector of people providing care to an older person who were employed in 'large' firms, drawing on the 2000/01 GHS sample. The table relates only to people in paid employment who were under state pension age. A distinction is drawn in the table between people employed in the 'other services' sector, which is likely to include the public sector, and those employed elsewhere. Table 8 shows that around a third of employed carers of older people were employed in the 'other services' sector.

Table 9 shows the number of employed people, who provided care to an older person and who were employed in 'large' firms, by their employment sector in 2000. The table shows that, of the estimated one million people who cared for an older person and worked in a large firm, approximately a third of a million were employed in the 'other services' sector (Table 9). Just under a quarter of a million provided care to an older parent and/or parent-in-law.

**Table 8**

**Employment sector of persons who provide care to an older person and who are employed in  
‘large’ establishments, by relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>		<i>Great Britain (row percentages)</i>			
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Sector in which employed			Weighted sample base (000's)	Unweighted sample
	‘Other services’	Elsewhere	Total		
Spouse/partner	[63]	[37]	100	8	3
Parent/-in-law	33	67	100	631	214
Other	45	55	100	263	87
Total	37	63	100	903	304

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author’s analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Large establishments are defined as those employing 100 people or more.*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

**Table 9**

**Estimated number (thousands) of persons providing care to an older person, by employment  
sector and relationship of person cared for to carer (employees of ‘large’ establishments only)  
2000**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>		<i>Great Britain</i>		
Relationship of older person cared for to carer	Employment sector		Total	
	‘Other services’	Elsewhere		
Spouse/partner	[5.67]	[3.36]	[9.03]	
Parent/-in-law	224.47	450.81	675.28	
Other	126.17	155.45	281.62	
Total	356.31	609.61	965.93	

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author’s analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Large establishments are defined as those employing 100 people or more.*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

## *Income of those employed in 'large' firms*

Table 10 shows the income of people who provided care to an older person and who were employed in 'large' establishments, by employment sector, drawing on the 2000/01 GHS sample. Incomes at or below the higher tax threshold, which in 2000/01 was £28,400 pa, are distinguished. The table shows that only a small minority (around 15%) of employed carers working in large establishments earned income at or above the higher tax threshold. The proportion was similar in both the 'other services' sector and elsewhere.

**Table 10**

**Income of persons who provide care to an older person and who are employed in 'large' establishments, by employment sector and relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000/01**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>		<i>Great Britain (row percentages)</i>			
Relationship of older person cared for to carer & sector	Gross annual income of individuals:			Weighted sample base	Unweighted sample
	<£28,400	£28,400+	Total	(000's)	
<i>'Other services'</i>					
Spouse/partner	[100]	[0]	100	5	2
Parent/-in-law	87	13	100	210	75
Other	[83]	[17]	100	118	40
Total	86	14	100	333	117
<i>Elsewhere</i>					
Spouse/partner	[100]	[0]	100	3	1
Parent/-in-law	78	22	100	421	139
Other	[92]	[8]	100	145	47
Total	82	18	100	570	187

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Large establishments are defined as those employing 100 people or more.*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

Table 11 shows the estimated number of employed people, who provided care to an older person and who worked in ‘large’ establishments, by their income and employment sector in 2000. The table shows that there were approximately 300 thousand people working in ‘large’ establishments in the ‘other services’ sector whose incomes were below the higher tax threshold in 2000. There were approximately 500 thousand people working in ‘large’ establishments elsewhere with incomes below the higher tax threshold. In total, then, there were approximately 800 thousand people with incomes below the higher tax threshold, who provided care for an older person and worked in ‘large’ establishments in 2000. Of these, over half a million were providing care for parents and/or parents-in-law.

**Table 11**  
**Estimated number (thousands) of persons providing care to an older person, by income, employment sector and relationship of person cared for to carer (employees of ‘large’ establishments only), 2000**

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>				<i>Great Britain</i>		
Relationship of older person cared for to carer:	Gross annual income of individuals:					
	Employed in ‘other services’			Employed elsewhere		
	<£28,400	£28,400+	Total	<£28,400	£28,400+	Total
Spouse/partner	[5.67]	[0.00]	5.67	[3.36]	[0.00]	3.36
Parent/-in-law	196.05	28.42	224.47	353.85	96.95	450.81
Other	[105.25]	[20.92]	126.17	[143.31]	[12.13]	155.45
Total	306.97	49.35	356.31	500.52	109.09	609.61

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author’s analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Large establishments are defined as those employing 100 people or more.*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*

## References

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## APPENDIX

### Income of persons who provide care to an older person and who are employed in ‘small’ establishments, by employment sector and relationship of person cared for to carer, 2000/01

<i>Persons aged 16 to state pension age</i>				<i>Great Britain (row percentages)</i>	
Relationship of older person cared for to carer & sector	Gross annual income of individuals:			Weighted sample base	Unweighted sample
	<£28,400	£28,400+	Total	(000's)	
<i>‘Other services’</i>					
Spouse/partner	[100]	[0]	100	3	1
Parent/-in-law	91	9	100	355	125
Other	89	11	100	147	53
Total	90	10	100	505	179
<i>Elsewhere</i>					
Spouse/partner	[71]	[29]	100	8	3
Parent/-in-law	92	8	100	503	171
Other	94	6	100	293	94
Total	92	8	100	804	268

*Source: 2000/01 GHS (author's analysis) & official mid-2000 population estimates*

*Spa is defined as below 60 years for women and below 65 years for men*

*Small establishments are defined as those employing less than 100 people.*

*Percentages are shown in square parentheses where the underlying sample base (sample row total) is less than 50.*